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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: Uzbeks Looking for Assistance on Security for Afghan Rail Project

REF: TASHKENT DAO IIR 6 939 0088 10 118346A
TASHKENT DAO IIR 6 939 0068 10 114220A

CLASSIFIED BY: Nicholas Berliner, Pol-Econ Chief; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Former Ambassador Joe Presel, in Tashkent on private business, gave Charge a readout of a meeting with the Chairman of the Uzbek National Security Service, Rustam Innoyatov. Confirming reports from other sources (Ref A), Innoyatov said the GOU is very concerned about the security of its people who are to build the rail line from Hairaton to Mazar-e Sharif and is seeking assistance. The Uzbeks want security to be a joint effort between the GOU, the Government of Afghanistan and the United States (or ISAF). Apparently, the concern of a potential attack or hostage taking is so great that it is holding up the start of the project, leading to tensions with the Kabul office of the Asian Development Bank and the prospect of costly penalty clauses being invoked.

¶2. (C) The GOU apparently understands that it may not get ISAF or U.S. forces to protect the project, but is expecting, at a minimum, Afghan Interior Ministry forces backstopped by ISAF. Innoyatov said that the GOU would like to set up a joint commission with the Government of Afghanistan, chaired on the Uzbek side by his own deputy. Although Innoyatov told Presel that the Uzbeks were already in contact with the Afghans, the GOU has never approached Embassy Tashkent for help on this issue. Embassy Kabul may wish to double-track this with the Uzbek Embassy there to help remove this roadblock for the rail project.

BUTCHER